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Biblical scholar, and the term being used by the commentator in a depreciatory sense, as if to say, he was a mere reader of the Bible, who, nevertheless, ventures to set himself up against an authority like R. Jacob b. Meir (Tam). (See my Introduction to זכרון, p. xii., and *Revue des Études Juives*, XVII., 276, note 5.) I must, however, confess, that this explanation is unsatisfactory, for since קרא (Kara) at that particular period was an honourable name for Biblical scholars, Benjamin cannot have used it as a term of opprobrium against an opponent. The correct and, according to my opinion, unassailable explanation of the word I believe I am able to offer in the following:—

In the Introduction to his work, in which he especially aims at refuting the decisions of the great R. Jacob b. Tam in the controversy between Menachem and Dunash, Joseph Kimchi apologises for daring to come forward against such an eminent man, the greatest authority of his time. He hears already how the ignorant among the people will attack him on that account, and puts into their mouth the words which Abner, Saul's captain, spoke, when David cried out to the king (1 Sam. xxvi. 14): מי אתה קראת אל המלך (see ס' הגלוי, p. 2, l. 20). Now, when Benjamin wrote his observations on the book, he called the author who had ventured to "cry" his contradiction to the "king," *i.e.*, to the highly esteemed and universally venerated Talmudist of Rameru, "the crier," הקורא, with special reference to the words of Abner, which Joseph Kimchi placed in the mouth of his opponents. Bent upon defending his master, Benjamin adopts Joseph Kimchi's Biblical quotation and calls the author of the polemic against R. Tam, in a contemptuous sense of the word, "the crier."

I would notice, in addition, that the surmise of Blüth, that our commentator Benjamin was no other than the pupil of R. Tam, Benjamin of Canterbury (*Magazin*, l. c., p. 130; comp. JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, II., p. 327) is confirmed by the fact that our commentator bases his remarks upon actual instruction received by him at the mouth of R. Tam (p. 19, last line but one): ולי בנימין פתר רבנו שיש לו ראייה מן המקרא.

A Talmudic Proverb in Petronius.

THE celebrated author of *Darstellungen aus den Sittengeschichte Roms*, Prof. L. Friedländer, has recently edited one of the most precious literary monuments from the early period of the Empire, the *Cena Trimalchionis* of Petronius, and has provided it with a splendid German translation (Leipsic, 1891).

Among the conversations held over the table of Trimalchio which so strikingly hit off the manners and mode of thought of the inhabitants of the smaller cities of the Empire, there is one concerning a certain man of business who, after having first obtained great wealth, quickly fell into decay. One sentence from this passage runs (p. 94): "Sociorum olla male fervet, et ubi semel res inclinata est, amici de medio." Friedländer translates it as follows: "When there is once an ebb in the funds of a man of business, his friends makes themselves scarce." In this translation, the first sentence of the original, "sociorum olla male fervet," is not correctly reproduced, having regard either to the syntax or to the contents of the quotation; for syntactically it is connected as first half of the protasis with the following "et ubi semel res inclinata est," while in the original it is an independent principal sentence. Moreover, the figure chosen by Friedländer of an "ebb in the funds" (*Ebbe in der Kasse*) is entirely different from that in the Latin sentence, which literally means "the pot of comrades boils badly." How Friedländer understands this latter image he tells us in his note (p. 228): "The basis is to be found in the proverb $\zeta\eta\ \chi\upsilon\tau\rho\alpha\ \chi\tilde{\eta}\ \phi\iota\lambda\acute{\iota}\alpha$." Hence, according to Friedländer, the meaning of the words "Sociorum olla male fervet" is the same as that of the Greek proverb, "When the pot boils, friendship boils." "When the pot of comrades boils badly"—when, consequently, friends are no longer entertained—then friendship comes to an end. But it is needless to point out what violence this explanation does both to the literal meaning and to the syntactical structure of the sentence. In point of fact, the four words in question are not to be explained according to the Greek proverb quoted by Friedländer, but they themselves form a proverb which is also to be met with, in an Aramaic garb, in the Babylonian Talmud. There, namely, we find in one place (*Erubin*, 3a) introduced with the words אמרי אנשי ("people say"), and in another (*Baba Bathra*, 24b) put into the mouth of the Amora Kahana, the saying, $\text{קידרא דבי שותפי לא קרירא ולא חמימא}$, i.e., "a pot, which is the common property of a number of partners, is neither cold nor hot." The meaning is that a pot in which several cook at the same time, to watch which, therefore, is as much one man's business as another's, will be neither hot nor cold, because no one looks after the fire, as each relies upon the other, and everyone imagines that some one else will attend to the matter. Now, precisely the same thing is obviously expressed by the saying of Petronius, "The pot of comrades boils badly." "Sociorum olla" is literally the same as קידרא דבי שותפי , and "male fervet" is substantially equivalent to $\text{לא קרירא ולא חמימא}$. In the Talmud the application of the proverb

in both places is perfectly clear : an obligation which devolves equally upon a number is not likely to be exactly fulfilled, as each of those upon whom the obligation rests will rely upon another for its performance. What Petronius means by his proverb is not so clear. I presume that it intends to express the idea that the affairs of the person referred to did not prosper, because he had partners in business (perhaps the "liberti" just before mentioned), upon whom he relied, although a "pot of comrades boils badly." But whatever be the sense in which the proverb of Petronius be applied, there can be no doubt that it is identical with that in the Babylonian Talmud. Another question is whether it was originally Aramaic or Latin. If the latter is the case, then the Latin proverb, like many another Latin saying, found its way from the Romans to the Jews, and has been accidentally preserved only among the Babylonian Jews. If, however, the proverb is originally Aramaic, and Babylon is its fatherland, then we may assume that it was early carried as far as Italy by freed slaves, or by veterans who had served on the Euphrates, and that it became a household word in those lower strata of the people from whom Petronius drew both the material and the phraseology of his accurate description. To my mind the second supposition seems the more probable. In either case, the age of the Talmudic proverb is increased by several centuries (Petronius died 66 A.D.).

Another phrase from the *Cena Trimalchionis* may here be cited, to which there are interesting analogies in the Talmud. Page 110, l. 7, of Friedländer's edition, we read, "Nunc populus est, domi leones, foras vulpes." Comp. *Baba Kamma*, 117a (Jochanan) : ארי שאמר : נעשה שועל, and the proverb (מתלא) quoted in *J. Sanhedrin*, 22b, by way of antithesis to Mishnah, *Aboth* IV. 20, הוי ראש לשועלים ולא זנב לאריות. Here also the proverb appears to be of Oriental origin, and to underlie the phrase in Petronius.

W. BACHER.

Was Homer Acquainted with the Bible?

To this question all Homeric scholars—whether they advocate the theory of the old blind poet having composed both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, or that of the works so called being merely a patchwork of popular legends strung together—will no doubt reply in the negative. Whilst some of them are willing to admit striking parallels in language and ideas between the Greek epic and the Bible (cp. Gladstone's *Juventus Mundi*), yet no critic of any standing has ever gone so far as to assert that the one work copied from the other. Although